The GroundWire

January 2005

The Prez Sez

With January of a New Year comes closing out and starting anew. We take stock of what we did and plan what to do. 2004 was full of challenges, accomplishments, and disappointments. The New Year promises the same. We hope that yours is happy and prosperous.

The DM80 Txpedition is coming up fast so we hope that everyone who is going has their reservations made by now. We are still in the process of gathering together equipment and tools and supplies for the HF station. Unlike our local field day we cannot easily run home to get something we forgot or didn't know we needed. So we hope the VHF, Satellite and the Rover team is doing the same. From talk on the repeater it sounds like the Rover team is getting it together. We are really looking forward to staying at the Prude Ranch. It will be a nice break from the winter blahs. If you would like to go and haven't committed yet there is still time. We know the weather is going to be perfect, but just in case, we will be scrutinizing the weather forecasts for that time period.

The TARC club repeaters took a beating from weather and hard use last year. At this month's meeting we need to discuss and plan for new antennas on the tower. It will be necessary to fund the purchase of antennas and the labor to install them.

We received a note of thanks from Mrs. Beverly Hogue for the overwhelming response to the sale of Aubry's equipment. And thanks from me for the help from Gaylen, KD5KIZ, in setting up the web site to help in that sale. And thanks to Rusty, KD5YWD, and Mike, WA5MOI, and Brenda, KD5SLA, for helping with testing and cataloging the equipment. Look for more equipment to be offered in a similar way.

This month's meeting will include a video of interest and if we don't eat it all ahead of time there is rumor of some very expensive chili. Might need some help with extras to go with it.

73 de kc5smc
Bob Sanford

New to the Family

Congratulations to Bradley Stegall, W5KEH, of Gladewater on his upgrade to Extra Class.

Congratulations to David Russ, KE5DHW, of Bullard on passing his Technician test.

Thanks to all the VE's who attended this December test session. We made it possible for these applicants to pursue a dream hobby.

To John Wheat, WA5JW, we miss your attendance at the test session. I continue to look for your truck in the Red Cross parking lot when I arrive. It will be a blessed day when you return. May the New Year be filled with the best of health to you. May God bless and keep you.

Mark Roddy
WA5MR

Club Directories are now available for Club members. If you did not receive one at the December meeting, please contact Ricky Cates, WA5RC for your copy.

Editorial
Pass The Plate

I am reminded of the preacher who told his congregation that the church was about to take the weekly offering. Of late, contributions had been few and far between. The preacher thought that he would inspire additional giving. He said that he knew of one church member who had committed adultery. He said he expected that member to contribute $100. When the plate was brought to the front it had 34 $100 bills in it.

My point is that we all can find some reason to contribute to the maintenance of our club equipment. Be sure to read Ed's report and consider your usage of the club repeaters. A few dollars from each member would go a long way toward paying for needed repairs without impacting the club's general fund. I encourage each member and/or user of the club's machines to help financially with the needed repairs. We can ALL spare some amount for this project. It is said "give 'til it hurts". Let's all feel some pain.

I wish each of you a happy and joyous New Year.

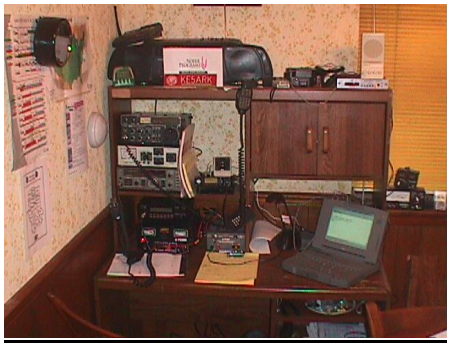
Rusty Walker
KD5YWD

The Tyler Amateur Radio Club for the benefit of its members and the Ham Radio Community publish the GroundWire monthly.

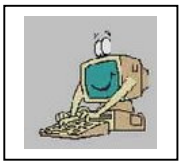
Shack Spotlight

Each month we will feature a station picture. This month I'll start it out with ours. Please submit your photos.

KE5ARK & KD5YWD



TARC Meeting on the third Thurs of each month at 7:00 PM at Shiloh Road Church of Christ. See the TARC website for a map if needed.



The Northeast Texas Radio Packet Network

1st

I need to thank Rusty and Tara for the great amount of work that they are putting into the TARC GroundWire and allowing me the opportunity to write about packet radio in this publication.

2nd

I would like to thank all of you for the emails and questions about packet radio, I hope I have helped answer a few of the questions and resolved some of the problems.

For the Year 2005, I would like to offer a thought for a local project for packet radio. I would like to see the development of a local electronic weather station that could be accessed via Internet and packet radio. Since local weather and skywarn programs are active in this area, I believe this would be an excellent addition to help the skywarn activities as well as having a local weather node that could be accessed 24hr a day for local Amateur use.

This project would require a location as well as the appropriate equipment and software to implement and maintain. In addition emergency power would be necessary to keep this system active during the inclement weather situations. There would be an initial cost for the set-up and start-up costs, but after that this system should maintain itself and be a great asset to the Northeast Texas Area. With the need to work with Emergency Services and multiple different types of events, it would serve very nicely to have a source to go to for up to date local weather information to help supplement what is available via the Internet.

In addition making it available via packet radio could offer an opportunity for those stations that do not have Internet access to look at local weather information. During your Holidays and time off, I would like for you to think about what I have mentioned here and see if this is something you would like to see developed and put on the air here in Northeast Texas Area.

If you have any comments pro or con please email them to WA5GM@arrl.net. I would like to hear from you. Thanks for reading this article and thanks very much to those of you who have emailed me and have stopped and asked me about packet radio.

I hope to see the interest in packet radio continue to grow and I hope to see a packet Radio Network grow and develop in Northeast Texas. Thanks for reading this article.

Help the fight against BPL and Help Keep Packet Radio Alive and well.

73"s
WA5GM AND KC5YOC
Gordon & Diana Martin

January Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes to the following club members celebrating a birthday in January.

Jan 2 Diana Martin, KC5YOC

Jan 6 Choice Humphries, N5OQR

Jan 20 John Arnold, W5CUD

If you have a birthday in January that is not listed, please contact Tara Walker, KE5ARK to update your record.

2004-2005 Club Officers

President
KC5SMC Bob Sanford

Vice-President
KD5KIZ Gaylen Gage

Secretary/Treasurer
WA5RC Ricky Cates

Board Members
W5EI Don McNallen
WA5GM Gordon Martin

I Saw It On The Internet

Occasionally I like to surf the Internet, just to see what's out there. I would like to pass on some of the information I've come across. Since spring is just around the corner, This article will be dedicated to Skywarn. One good way to use some of these web addresses is to highlight the address then copy and paste to the address bar on your web browser. (You may need to hit the letter V on your keyboard to be able to highlight the address)

The Shreveport, LA Weather Service website:
http://www.srh.weather.gov/shv/

Here is some information on Skywarn and some training materials to download:
http://www.srh.weather.gov/shv/skywarn.htm

If you would like to see where and when Skywarn training would take place in our area: (Feel free to take your Skywarn training in another town, the meetings are open to the public. I took my training in Marshall and Nacogdoches; it gave me an opportunity to meet a few of the local hams in those areas.)
http://www.srh.weather.gov/shv/Skywarn_ClassSchedule.htm

Maybe you would like to order some Skywarn apparel:
www.skywarnsupply.com
www.rainfreebase.com
www.anythingweather.com

Here is some training information on how to conduct yourself once deployed:
http://ke4a.ke4ujp.com/tngdocs.htm

2005 HAMCOM, Arlington, TX 2005 Information now available
www.hamcom.org

That's it for this installment; I hope you find this information useful.

I saw it on the Internet, it must be true.

Domingo Garcia
KE5CGT

ETECS notes

I believe this is the ninth year that ETECS participated in the Tyler PD program called "Eyes and Ears". I remember when we first started there was a large problem with gang actions in and around the Mall. Since we have started helping using our Eyes and Ears, issues have continuously lessened. This year, it was again uneventful. No real reportable issues at least while we were present. I have received a call from the Mall management offering their appreciation to all the operators that participated this year. As a show of their appreciation, they have made a donation to ETECS in the amount of $100.00. We had a total of 21 operators participate during nine weekend days. We logged a total of 137 man-hours during those days. I want to extend my sincere thanks to all the operators that gave up their time especially during a holiday season. Thanks for your willingness to give up personal time and your continued support of ETECS operations. More details of our participation will be given at the next TARC meeting.

KC5SMC, Bob Sanford, and I had a good visit with N5REO, Darrell Tolland in Longview. Darrell is the director of Gregg County Emergency Communications. We discussed how we might work with the Gregg County operators to expand RACES and ETECS coverage into other counties. Darrell appeared to be open to a closer relationship with ETECS under the RACES umbrella. We plan to provide a presentation to the LETARC club at some point in the future. We will have more details to follow on this opportunity.

I look forward to a New Year and our opportunities to expand ETECS. Again, the burden (and fun) of this expansion will fall on us here in Smith County. I'm hoping we can help provide better coverage for Homeland Security in State Disaster District 1B. I appreciate your support in this effort.

73,
John Newman
N9JN
East Texas Emergency Communication Service, Inc.
P.O. Box 8911
Tyler, Texas 75711

Coming Events

Jan 9 VE Test Session 2:00pm at the Red Cross Building in Tyler.

Jan 20 TARC Club Meeting 7:00pm at the Shiloh Road Church of Christ.

Jan 31 ETECS Net 7:15pm

Feb 13 VE Test Session 2:00pm at the Red Cross Building in Tyler.

Feb 17 TARC Club Meeting 7:00pm at the Shiloh Road Church of Christ.

Feb 26-27 TARC DM-80 TXpedition at Prude Ranch in West Texas

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Ham Radio And the Media

The media can be a very valuable tool to use to get the word out about Ham radio. And, it's much easier than folks might think. In a media market like East Texas, often news managers and editors are grasping for any story they can to get minutes of air time, or column inches in a newspaper. As you can see by picking up the Tyler or Longview papers, there are stories just about every day about people and their hobbies and activities. Television news obviously has less time to cover all the news of the day. However, feature stories are still a part of a newscast. More importantly, though are stories that have a "hard news peg," or some aspect that we can hang our hat on and call "real news."

A clear example of this is our role as emergency communicators. Whether it's traffic handling in an emergency, storm spotter nets, or any other kind of disaster or community-benefit activity, it's of interest to both newspaper and television.

That brings me to the five best ways to get ham Radio on television.

First, when you call the newsroom, ask to speak to the Assignments editor. That is the person in the newsroom with the planning calendar and the person who sends crews to their stories. Asking to speak to your favorite reporter or anchor won't often get the job done. There are too many people calling those people, and not the person who pulls the strings. By the way, while the News Director is in ultimate charge of what goes on, any communication to that person will usually get passed on the A.E. Calling "the desk" as it's called is the best bet.

Second, pitch a story for a weekend. While there are usually far fewer crews working weekends, there is also much less news. In fact, there are some weekends when reporters and managers are dying for a story, any story, to put on the air. Schedule an interesting event for a weekend, and there's a good chance you'll get covered.

Third, for the sake of brevity, I'll lump three related things into one. There must be people involved, it must be relevant to others, and it must contain good "visuals". A story about one person doing one thing isn't very interesting to most people. To be honest, stories that may interest a small group of people (hams) won't likely get covered. But, a story about ham radio being introduced to schoolkids (ISS contacts, anyone?) probably will. Schoolkids tuning a radio and marveling at what they can hear is great video. By the way, television news loves children.

Fourth, if there are people involved (there should be!), designate someone to be the "central character." This is especially important if you want a longer-form story, instead of just a short blurb at 10pm. As a rule, our reporters no longer just go to an event and interview random people, getting random (boring) responses. We search for a central character –someone that the viewer can relate to. I'll give and example. Interviewing someone at Field Day about what is happening on the radio is boring to most. Interviewing someone who once was able to save a life, or give emergency help is interesting. Make sure that central character is the person who will stand out in a crowd. If that person is a well-spoken kid, that's even better! If there isn't a compelling story from your central person, don't expect much play on the news.

Fifth, Advance notice, advance notice, advance notice. I can't stress this enough. If you decide to contact the newsroom the day of your event, you're probably going to be ignored (emergency situations excepted). Proper advance notice for an event is about three weeks. Call the newsroom and tell the assignments manager that a fax will be coming his or her way within the next few minutes. Very briefly explain who you are and the event you're promoting. Mention the central character and the reason your event should be covered. Just mentioning Field Day won't excite anyone. Saying that our operators were involved in the emergency communications of 9/11, and this is how we train for another disaster might get a nibble. Follow up two weekdays prior with another phone call and fax. One more thing: make your calls between 10am and lunchtime. You're most likely to find the assignments editor will have a little time to listen. NEVER call after 3pm, unless it's an emergency. Things get very hectic around newstime. Remember that the assignments editor is usually the busiest person in the newsroom. When there are other calls holding, he wants you to get to the point fast.

Those are some tips for dealing with the media, especially television. Television isn't hard to get on at all. It just takes some coaxing and some planning. And if your event you've prepared for doesn't get covered, don't despair. Sometimes, a busy news day will bump other stories. It's not personal. It's just the nature of the beast.

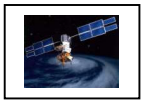
E-mail me any good story ideas you have, and I'll do what I can from the inside!

73
Morgan Palmer
K5TVT
K5tvt@arrl.net

Newsbreak

Ricky Cates entered Trinity-Mother Frances Hospital on Tuesday, January 4th for tests. He is still there as of the publication of this newsletter. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Satellite Corner



Let' s put a portable satellite station together!

This will be a minimal $ station that should fit within any budget utilizing existing equipment that nearly every ham has.

We will first start with the portable rig; I have an Alinco DJ-580 dual bander that I use and a Yaesu FT-50RD dual bander. These are the uplink and downlink rigs that I use for working the FM sats. These rigs both have rubber duck antennas on them. In place of the Yaesu I have used a couple different handheld scanners with pretty good results. I have used my homebrew arrow antenna with the Alinco and another rig. I use 2 rigs or I would have to have a $65 duplexer to operate with just the one rig and this is a minimal $ station. I have also used a hotrod antenna on the Alinco for a little signal gain on the uplink but normally it wouldn't be required. I also have a homebrew 70cm J-Pole to help with the UHF signal.

I first look at the frequencies to be used to determine which rig I will use for the 70cm frequency. 70cm is the critical freq. whether it is for uplink or downlink because it is more sensitive to a degraded signal because of line of sight blockage by trees, buildings etc.

I would normally use my Alinco DJ-580 for uplink on 2 meters and the Yaesu for 70cm downlink. I have the freq' s. plugged into both rigs so it is my choice which rig I want to use for uplink/downlink.

I will use the DJ-580 for 2 mtr. uplink and the Yaesu for downlink on 70cm. I attach my SMA adapter to the Yaesu and then attach my homebrew 70cm handheld J-pole to it or the UHF side of the arrow antenna. I merely use the rubber duck on the DJ-580 for the uplink as this is normally sufficient or I can use the VHF side of the arrow antenna.

Well that should do it! Not quite there are a few other little goodies that are needed. You are faced with weak signal operation so headphones will be required. Radio Shack and others sell a 1/8" Y adapter that allows you to plug the headphones into one side of the Y, and a small external speaker into the other side of the Y and place it on the ground. This allows any onlookers to hear the downlink and I also lay my small cassette recorder near the speaker to record the pass. I like to keep a log of contacts because you will receive several QSL cards from those contacts you make. This allows me to log at a later time. I always record a label as to the sat/time of pass on the tape before the pass starts.

We are nearly done but there is a very important item that is still missing; where is the sat at and what time will it be in view?

Some operators use their desktop computer with tracking software, some use a laptop with tracking software, some use a handheld computer with software, and some go to the Internet and print out the passes for their areas. I have used my laptop setting on the hood of my vehicle to track the sat while I am trying to work it but I prefer using my Treo 90 (Palm OS) with SatTrack software on it. It is much smaller and though it does not give me live tracking it does give me a picture of where the sat is and what the elevation will be as it passes over. I have seen numerous operators using handheld computers just because they are small and less cumbersome. That pretty well wraps it up for a low $ portable satellite station to work the FM sats. You can go to the club site which KD5KIZ keeps updated at http://members.cox.net/kd5kiz and visit the satellite elmer page for frequencies you will need. I hope this article will lure you into giving it a try.

Ron Smith
N5SMJ
n5smj@amsat.org

TARC Membership Updates

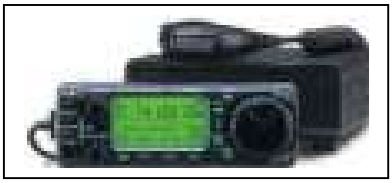
There are currently 60 members of the TARC. Membership is available to all licensed amateur operators and those wishing to become Hams or who have an interest in the hobby.

Officer elections are held at the annual meeting in May. Membership dues are $20.00 annually and are due by the June meeting. Dues are used to support the cost of the club repeaters, Field Day and other club events, and promoting the hobby of the Ham Radio Community.

The "Toy" Box

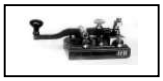
The Icom 706 MKIIG is a wonderful radio for all around use. It could benefit greatly by the use of the optional filters, which I have not yet purchased. It is NOT a "Contest" radio, but more of an all use, all band, all mode unit that works well as a mobile radio or as your primary base unit, with the proper 25 amp power supply. I have used the radio on 6M, 2M, and 70CM, SSB with good results. At Field Day, many contacts have been made on 40 and 20 meters. I have never used 10M, 12M, 30M, 80M, or 160M on my radio. I would recommend this radio, especially for mobile SSB use to anyone considering a smaller all band radio or if you can only have one radio due to space constraints.

Gaylen Gage
KD5KIZ



The opinions expressed in each of the articles are solely those of the author and are not the opinions of the Tyler Amateur Radio Club

Morse Matters



In the aftermath of the *Titanic* disaster of 1912, it was widely recognized that the nascent maritime radiotelegraph industry needed a standardized method of communications other than the alphabet soup of codes then in use. In July of the same year, the International Telegraphic Convention was held. Out of the proceedings there came the common use of Q signals for shipboard radiotelegraph operators.

Hams from the beginning picked up on the use of Q signals, and still use them frequently. For CW operators, their purposes are many, and even phone operators tend to sprinkle them about in everyday conversation on the air (and off). There are many of them, but here are a few heard often:

QRL	Are you busy?
QRM	Is my transmission being interfered with?
QRN	Are you troubled by static?
QRO	Shall I increase transmitter power?
QRP	Shall I decrease transmitter power?
QRS	Shall I send slower?
QRT	Shall I shop sending?
QRU	Have you anything further for me?
QRV	Are you ready?
QRZ	Who is calling me?
QSB	Are my signals fading?
QSL	Can you acknowledge receipt?
QSO	Can you communicate with……direct?
QSY	Shall I transmit on another frequency?
QTH	What is your location?

A Q signal followed by a ? asks a question. A Q signal without the ? answers affirmatively, unless otherwise indicated. Curiously enough some, but not all of these, are used on both phone and CW. For example, if a ham wants to know who is calling him on the air, he will send in CW, QRZ? On phone, the same thing will happen, but the Q signal will be vocalized as, QRZed? That stands in contrast with the fact that if a ham on phone is trying to determine if the frequency is in use before transmitting, he will simply ask, is the frequency in use? On CW, you will hear the same ham will send only, QRL? Q signals are used as nouns (The QRM was bad today on 20), verbs (I QSYed to 40 meters), adjectives (She is a QRP operator), and adverbs (He went QRT).

If you don't know Q signals, then copying hams in who communicate Morse can be difficult. Although you might not plan to operate CW, familiarizing yourself with them can still be a big advantage when operating on the HF bands. Signal reporting will be the topic of next month's column.

73 es CUL
Don McNallen
W5EI

For Sale

1. Yaesu Ft 920 HF+50Mhz
   All mode transceiver
2. Yaesu MD-100a8x
   Desk Top Microphone
3. Yaesu SP-8 External Loudspeaker
   With Audio Filters

I have the original boxes and manuals for the above items, and additional information for menu settings. I do not want to separate these items.
PACKAGE DEAL $1,000 + shipping if needed.
If sale items and wanted separately, prices will go up to more accurately reflect going prices on the E-??? place that sells used things.
If you are interested call 479-926-5845 after 6pm or email kg5ne@arrl.net.
Randy, KG5NE

Radio Shack Pro-2041 400 channel scanner. Hyperscan, Triple conversion Superheterodyne receiver. One of the better scanners RS sold made by GRE for them. BNC external antenna hookup, pull up rod antenna and original owners manual. Very nice condition. $100.00. Call 903-534-5509 or email n5smj@winfieldcourier.com.
Ron Smith, N5SMJ

Alinco DJ-190 VHF handheld. Rubber duck, original owners manual, and alkaline pack. Extended receive 136.000-173.995 FM with 40 memory channels. Very nice condition. $50.00 Call 903-534-5509 or email n5smj@winfieldcourier.com
Ron Smith, N5SMJ

VE Test Sessions are held at the American Red Cross Bldg on Rieck Road at 2:00pm on the 2nd Sunday of each month except for when it falls on a holiday.

The *GroundWire* is available via email in PDF format.
Submit your email address for monthly delivery.

Article Submission

To submit information for columns or articles: go to the TARC website @ www.tylerarc.com. Click on the current events link. Then
click on one of the email links for the GroundWire.

Repeater Notes

For those who read the last Ground Wire article I sent out here is an update on recent changes at the M-Side tower location.

2m 147.000 -600KHz
PL 88.5 tone MSR2000
down to 28 watts

The SWR is starting to climb from 1.6:1 to 2.3:1 indicating that a change in the GP9 antenna system may need attention. A TDR test on feed line and antenna will need to be done prior to any repairs to determine if a new antenna is needed. 440 side of antenna is rising too and this may be in the antenna. It has been up at the 350' level since we installed it over 10 years ago.

70cm 444.400 +5MHz
PL 110.8
Uniden ARU251 18watts

2m 145.370 -600KHz
PL 88.5
Uniden ARH351 28watts

Moved to Airport

The SWR has jumped from 1.7:1 to 3.5:1 indicating that a major change in the GP9 antenna system occurred. A TDR test on feed line prior to repairs to determine if a new antenna will be needed. The 440 side of antenna has risen too and this may be in the antenna. It has been up at the 310' level since we moved from this location to the 350' level over 10 years ago.

The TARC TYR KaNode packet system at 260' still looks good. SWR is still at 1.45:1 on 2m side to 1.6:1 on 440 side. No problems indicated on this system so we should be OK for now.

Operations at this repeater site are through the generosity of Pinnacle Towers now called Global Signal in Florida. They allow us to operate our equipment there with the understanding that we provide the necessary cleaning and grounds work in and around the tower. Recent talks with their site operations Manager and the loss of a long time tenant at the site last month may bring some changes down the road someday. Hopefully if we keep up our end on the cleanup and taking care of the building, we may not see any changes. In any case we should continue to hold up our end so that nothing can be said.

Looking at what a tower crew will charge for a day's work, new antennas, feed line jumpers and wire ties. We may need to plan an expense of about $1500-2000 to cover the work. If all we need are the antennas removed and or replaced, then get a crew for a half-day it could be less. Closest tower crew now has to come from Arlington, so travel expense will probably be added along with their time at the site. If we don't do any repairs and upgrade the system it will slowly degrade to a point where the 147 repeater will not work and cause itself damage. I have already pulled the 145.37 off because of the shorted antenna system. I had to replace a power supply bridge rectifier and power transistor to get the Uniden up and running again. Until that level is fixed it is unusable and should be repaired. To plan these repairs we need to order a couple new GP9's and have them ready for the crew to install if we decide to do the repairs. A special fund and or possible donation drive might need to be considered so that the club funds will not be totally drained for this project. I am hoping all who use the 147 Rptr and the other systems will help out in this time of need. We have been really blessed all these years and this may be the year we need to do some "PM" (Preventative Maintenance). Please attend the January meeting so that we can discuss the options and make some decisions together.

73's
Ed Wilkinson

Local Area Nets

TARC 2 meter net on Mondays at 8:00pm on the 147.000- repeater with an 88.5 tone. Gordon Martin, WA5GM is Net Control.

ETECS net on the last Monday of each month at 7:15pm on the 147.000- repeater with an 88.5 tone. Bob Sanford, KC5SMC is Net Control.

Cherokee County ARC net on Thursdays except the 1st Thursday at 8:00pm on the 146.800- repeater with a 136.5 tone. Net Control rotates weekly.

Sidewinders on 2 net for those with sideband capabilities on Saturdays at 7:00am on the frequency 144.250. Don Simonton, K5LOW is Net Control.

Longview ARC net on Tuesdays at 8:30pm on the 147.340+ repeater with a 136.5 tone.

Northeast Texas Traffic and Emergency Net on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at 7:30pm on the 145.300- repeater with a 146.2 tone. Tom Kennedy, K5TDK is Net Control.

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